

# OpenTheo

## Christianity and the Tooth Fairy | John Lennox

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### The Veritas Forum

Children believe in the tooth fairy until their reasoning capabilities mature and they recognize this belief is neither grounded nor relevant. Does belief in Jesus Christ require a similar suspension of logic? Can Christianity be proven to be true? UCLA law professor Daniel Lowenstein interviews Oxford mathematician John Lennox with honest questions about Christianity and the grounds for faith.

### Transcript

It might be strange for you to hear an Oxford professor say it, but the biggest thing in my life, ladies and gentlemen, is that God loves me and that God has done something through Christ on the cross that brings forgiveness and peace with God and gives me a certainty and a meaning for the future. I like your image very much from Chesterton of the things stretched out wide. The cross only makes sense if Jesus is God, it makes no sense of the isn't.

So hence the resurrection is so important to direct our minds to ask the big question if that is God on the cross, what's He doing there? If you grew up in a household that has spoused to belief in the Tooth Fairy, then you may recall the sense of magic you felt upon waking the next morning with a crisp dollar bill and a place of the tooth you had painfully lost the night before. But as with many things in life, this magic is lost when our reasoning capabilities mature and we recognize this belief is neither grounded nor relevant. This same belief structure is often applied to Christianity and many people perceive Christians as children who just never stopped believing.

In this episode we feature a conversation from the Baratost form at UCLA with Oxford mathematician John Lennox. For many Lennox represents the best of intellectual Christianity, a formidable scholar, he is best known for his writings on the credibility of the Christian faith as well as his widely publicized debates with Richard Dawkins and L.A. Christopher H.A.N.S. This conversation, moderated by UCLA law professor Daniel Lowenstein entitled Christianity in the Tooth Fairy, explores the evidence for Christianity in light of common conceptions of Christians as intellectually adolescent. Regardless of

your experience with Christianity, we hope this conversation challenges you to think more deeply and honestly about the implications of Christian belief.

As a member of the faculty here, I'd like to welcome all of you to the UCLA campus and to thank Dr. Lennox for being our guest tonight and to thank the Baratost forum for inviting the two of us. I hope that those of you who are in the overflow room can see us well because I think anybody who looks at the two of us will conclude that this will be a very weighty conversation. With that, I'd like to make two brief preliminary comments and then we'll get into putting some questions to Dr. Lennox.

First of all, as to the topic for tonight, I think that there are many questions that one can ask about Christianity and that have been prominent in recent debates on the subject, especially perhaps those prompted by the so-called New Atheists such as is Christianity good, what has been its role in Western history and so on and so many questions and they're all important. But tonight will be limited to one question which is a big enough question and that is Christianity true. I guess in terms of the title that was given to this evening, is it less true, equally true or more true than stories about the tooth fairy? The second point I want to make is that this is not a debate.

I'm neither qualified nor desirous of debating with Dr. Lennox on this subject. As I see it at least, the purpose this evening is to give him who's written and thought a great deal about this subject, to give him an opportunity to expound his views and my role is to facilitate that. If I think I can do that best by probing him on certain points, I will try to do that to the best of my ability, but I'm not trying to score points.

That's not our purpose here. I'm as interested in thinking about this with his help and the help of others as I assume all of you are. So with that preliminary, let's get right to it.

I want to start with what I think is the main subject of perhaps Dr. Lennox's best known book on this subject called "God's Undertaker." That is the relation between Christianity and science. I think many people would think that ideas about Christianity developed in a prescientific era in which there weren't the explanations that we now have for many natural phenomena. And they may think that really that those kinds of ideas aren't as necessary now to explain the universe and they may feel that, and the human situation in the universe, and they may feel that science has made religion more or less irrelevant.

And do you want to respond to that viewpoint? I'd be delighted to respond to it, but first ladies and gentlemen, I would like to say how delighted I am to have such a companion to discuss with tonight. I have enjoyed the company of lawyers all my life, admired, admired their capacity for logical analysis, and to meet a lawyer like Professor Leuenstein, who's interested in the humanities, is sheer delight. But my intellectual education has taken a massive leap forward today, sir, because as a boy, I used to like brew in the bear.

And now I've discovered where he lives. But let's get down to this question about the very common notion that science has made religion obsolete. I find it almost ironical that it's actually a very false notion to history.

I think it's worth concentrating for sake of compression of time and argument on the fact that modern science, as we know it, exploded in the 16th and 17th centuries in Western Europe. And historians and philosophers of science have constantly asked the question, why did it happen there and why did it happen then? And I've given a great deal of thought to this and work with colleagues at Oxford who contributed seminal works to it. But the general consensus appears to be, and I put it in the words of C.S. Lewis, summing up the work of Alfred North Whitehead on the topic, when he said, "Men became scientific because they expected law in nature and they expected law in nature because they believed in the law giver." In other words, if we think of Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Clark Maxwell and so on, what drove their science was the belief that science could be done.

Now why did they believe it could be done? Because they believed that the universe was rationally intelligible, at least in part. And why did they believe that? Because they believed there was a creative mind behind it. So it seems to me that the history of science is on the side of those that think that there is no conflict essentially between them.

So that's where I'd start on that one. But I think probably many, perhaps most people would concede that Christianity was very intimately tied with the development of science and with the scientific culture that we're still living in. But that doesn't really go to the question of whether science, even if we regard it as the creature of Christianity, has made Christianity obsolete.

In other words, does science give us the explanations that Christianity was previously thought to be necessary for? I think here there's a basic and very common confusion about the nature of explanation. Because very often today, and I find it especially in Stephen Hawking's recent book, but also with Richard Dawkins, the idea that explanation is either God or science, and that the more science advances the less space there is for God. Now that seems to me to be extremely wrong-headed for the following simple reason, that it's not either or.

God and science are not in the same categories. God, the claim is from where I sit, is a personal creator who created and maintained the universe. That is he is the agent responsible for its existence.

This is a set of disciplines that investigate how it works and what it is made of and so on. And if I may illustrate it by one particular instance that Hawking, for example, offers us to choose between God and science or God and the law of gravity. That to my mind is like saying, here's a four-galaxy motor car.

You've got two possible explanations for it. One is the laws of physics and internal combustion and the other is Henry Ford. Please choose.

Well, that is nonsense because they're in different categories. You need both. Now, what I'm saying here is this, that the God explanation is not the same kind of explanation as the science explanation, so they're not in competition.

Henry Ford does not compete as an explanation of the motor car with the laws of internal combustion and engineering. You need both. And I think that is the important thing to stress.

It's not a question of one making the other obsolete. You need both. And I would dare to say that if there wasn't a God who created the universe, there'd be nothing for the scientists to study anyway.

Well, some scientists say, I think, and some who are not scientists say, that science teaches us that before we regard something as knowledge, it should be something that we can test empirically. And that we may have great theories about whether it's quantum mechanics or Newtonian mechanics or any kind of engineering, whatever field. But the reason that we have confidence in them is because they have been tested and they work.

And that the questions that religion and Christianity in particular addresses have not been and perhaps cannot be tested in that way. So can we regard, and even as a Christian, would you want to say that we can actually have knowledge of the existence of God, of all the various doctrines and parts of the Christian religion, can we call that knowledge or should we call it something different? Well, I certainly think we can call it knowledge. It depends what we're talking about.

You see, if we take the Bible, for instance, because we're concentrating on Christianity, as you've said, as to whether it's true, Christianity makes statements, and the Bible makes statements about a whole range of things. It makes statements, not very many actually, about the physical universe. It's not a textbook of science.

But we needn't go away with the idea that says nothing about the universe. Now, for instance, it says there was a beginning. Can we test that? Well, apparently so.

Ardo Penzias and the rest of them came up with their theory of the hot big bang. So there is a testable hypothesis. It's been sitting in the Bible for centuries.

There was a beginning. We've now come after a lot of struggle, actually, and I remember when it was done in the 60s. So those are testable kind of things.

But I suspect what you may be referring to is the idea that, "God is not a theory simply. He's a person." And that raises the whole question of whether we can have a relationship

with God that can reasonably be described in terms of knowledge. And I believe that is possible.

And can we test it? Yes, I believe we can, because specifically coming to Christianity, the fact is that Christ made certain claims. He claimed that if people trusted Him, they would know an experience of forgiveness. They would know an experience of what He called eternal life that their lives would be changed.

I've seen it happen hundreds of times. And I would say at the empirical level, this is very important to me that not only does the intellectual side of it, if you like, the objective side, the descriptors that match reality in terms of what the Bible actually says about the universe and so on. But the bottom line for me is, does it actually work? Is it testable? And I think it is.

Before we leave the subject of science, I asked you a question that was in my mind, I had a chance to read your book, "God's Undertaker" with an allowance, a month or two. No, I enjoyed it. I haven't read his books, you see.

I'm embarrassed. Well, you see, that shows how rational both of us are. But no, I do recommend, it's a very enjoyable book and I recommend it to anybody who is interested in the subject.

I'll just say in passing that in my own thinking about Christianity, such as it is, the question of science has not been a major barrier or a major issue for me. But I do think that it is for many people and I think it was sensible for you to write that book and the reason I started with that subject is I think that it probably is important to many of the people who are listening to us. But it seemed to me that there are two ideas or two, let's say two hypotheses in the book and I'll call one a weak hypothesis and the other strong.

Weak is not a pejorative, in fact, in this kind of academic jargon. It's a good thing because a weak hypothesis one that doesn't take as much to prove it, it's easier to accept and a strong one is one that's harder to prove. The weak hypothesis seemed to me to be, let's say, defensive, defending Christianity against various reasons why science might be thought to disprove Christianity.

And the strong hypothesis is perhaps more positive and saying that the findings of science actually tend to confirm Christianity in it. It seemed to me that you're clearly making both of those arguments in the book. But it wasn't always obvious to me how much you're really, how strongly you are asserting the strong hypothesis.

I'd be interested in your talking about how much does science really, the findings of science as you understand them or as properly understood really further, would you say, in a positive way, the case for Christianity or if you were trying to get somebody to accept Christianity, to become a Christian, would you want to focus that person's

attention a lot on science or really have the person look at other questions? Not if they were a lawyer. I thought I'd not comment on the judgment of somebody who starts out by saying he enjoys the company of lawyers. I think in the British we expect eccentricities and we tolerate that.

Let's try and unpack this because I think there are a number of things that are worth unpacking. We've used the word Christianity. But actually in the world in which I live, initially I'm up against a worldview that dominates the academy that denies the existence of God- is, as I've said, the rational intelligibility of the universe points towards a rational creator.

That sits comfortably with the rise of science. So pointers towards God. But I would not claim that Christianity in the narrower sense is derivable from science.

Let me put it this way. The early Christian apostle Paul who wrote half of the New Testament, comments very carefully on what can be in his view and deduced from the natural world. And he says from the beginning of the creation, the invisible things of God are clearly perceived, not proved, perceived in the things that are made and any names them, namely God's everlasting power and Godhead.

Now that second word, Theotokos, I take to mean that there is a God. There's a bit of controversy about what it means. But for the moment, we don't want to get into that.

What I would say is that Paul is being very careful. First of all, appeals to me as a mathematician because it's only in pure mathematics that you get rigorous proof in that sense. But it's perception.

It's an informed perception. And he says, as you look at the natural world, you can perceive that there is a God and that he's powerful. He certainly claims nowhere that you can deduce the specific doctrines of Christianity from an observation of the world.

But it seems to me this is an incremental type of argument because in Oxford and elsewhere, I'm confronted not with people who start talking about Christianity. They start off by denying the existence of God in the name of science. So I want to clear that ground away, first of all, in the hope that they'd then be plausible for them, at least to take the next step.

And that is the step towards considering the more specific claims of the Christian faith. So I think your question is very important. So let's start with just the question of the existence of God.

How important in your belief in the existence of God is your understanding of the findings of science? It's only part of the deal. And for the reasons that I've just given, because it doesn't take us all that far, but of course it takes us to the difference between atheism and theism. And I think how important it is is shown by the number of people in

these two rooms tonight.

In the sense that, what is happening in our world as I understand it is we're being offered a story. And every person is interested in a story into which they can fit their lives. And the story of so to speak, the origins of the universe way back.

Why does that fascinate us? Because of course our past determines our identity. A person without a past who has amnesia doesn't know who they are. And so our bookshops are filled with books attempting to explain who we are in terms only of the basic material of the universe.

That's materialism. And there's a great fascination with this because people are interested in whether it's true or not. Against that there's the other story that says that the matter and energy is not all that exists.

There is transcendence. There is a God who created it. And I tend to believe with Augustine that granted that there is a God-shaped space in our hearts.

And we have that sense of longing that there must be something more. And it's there I think that many contemporary people have. Many university students are at, is there something more than pure materialistic explanation of the universe? Well, let's suppose that we assume for the sake of argument that the materialist explanation of the universe is inadequate.

And therefore that we reject what I think you call the "scientific explanation." But there are I suppose an infinite number of possible ideas that we could have of the universe as something that's more than just materialism. My not very well informed belief is that the great majority of cultures past and present have not believed in a materialistic universe. But most of them also have not believed in the monotheistic God in which Judaism, Christianity and Islam believe.

Why should we, what reason is there to accept the idea of a monotheistic, theistic God? Well, the first thing I'd want to say there is you are absolutely right. And there are apparently loads and loads of ideas. But let me go back to your notion of testability.

The only way I know about dealing with these things and you being a lawyer will know it even better than me is where's the evidence? They make claims, all these different philosophies and religions. And here I am faced with a whole series of claims. And in the end, it's a personal question in the sense that ultimately I have to decide between the claimants.

So first of all, I have to decide between if materialism is right or if there's something more that's stage one. So suppose we're now past that stage. Why should I select a monotheistic God? Well, I would say now what is the evidence that God exists because another great myth that's flying around the place is that if you believe in God, that's

faith.

So it's believing where there is no evidence. But that's nonsense. Faith in the ordinary use of the word, it comes from the Latin, "fides," "fidelity," it means "trust." And our normal experience of faith in everyday life is a commitment based on evidence.

And certainly I want my commitment to whatever is there to be based on evidence. So what is the evidence coming closer up that there is a personal God and secondly that he is the God I believe in as a Christian? Now I've given one or two indicators that it would seem to be that the idea of there being two equal gods is almost logically self-contradictory. But the big thing that now comes into the equation for me is this.

On the hypothesis that there might be a God, we're open to that now it seems in our conversation that there might be a God who created the universe. The next question is, is it possible that he might have communicated to us in any way? As God spoke. And that raises the question of course of revelation.

And you mentioned the three great monotheistic religions. Each of them claims that there is such a thing as revelation. And indeed part of that revelation is common to all three.

So there is somewhere that we can begin to start because let's take Christianity for a moment Judaism neither of them claim to be simply a philosophy. They're geared into the story of history. They have a historical dimension.

So immediately that shifts the focus from science to another very respectable discipline. And that is the discipline of history. You are quite right by the way and I think it's important to flag it up to mention scientism the idea that science is the only way to truth.

Well that's logical nonsense because if I say science is the only way to truth that is not a scientific statement. And so if science is the only way to truth then it isn't true. So science isn't the only way to truth.

It's a bit too late at night I think for logic like that. But coming rapidly back down to earth it's quite clear that science a lot of its success is due to the fact that there are a limited number of questions. But history is a very important discipline.

So I want to look into the claims historically that God has revealed himself. That makes sense to me. I've just met you today and meeting you has been a sheer delight.

But it's been very interesting you say if I simply come to Professor Lone State and put him in a scanner in Berkeley Medical School. The biggest... Hey we have a medical school here we don't have to go to Berkeley for that. What time is it? Right and you see LA that ecosystem.



They've got a better tunneling microscope here. I was just given Berkeley a chance. They could tell a lot about the activity of your brain.

But I could never get to know you as a person. But I'm beginning to get to know you as a person. Why is that? Because you have started... Could you haven't had to look at my brain? No, no, no.

But you have spoken. You have started to reveal yourself to me. I think this is very important because very often people say, "Oh no, we're not going to start in holy books and revelation now, are we?" Because revelation is opposed to reason.

What absurdity? When Professor Lone State began to reveal himself to me today, "Did I shut off my reason?" That's nonsense. I have to use my reason to understand what you say. Now the central biblical claim is that God has spoken.

He has revealed himself. Now we can assume our priority if we like that that cannot and doesn't occur. And of course many people say, "Well of course it can't occur because miracles are impossible.

The supernatural doesn't exist because science has proved it. I don't believe anything of the sort." But leaving that aside, I would want them to say, "Right. Let's investigate this claim that God has spoken.

Does it make sense? Does it go here?" And here I found that the literary people have helped me, C.S. Lewis in particular. Remember that wonderful statement he made? "I believe in the sun. Not so much because I see it.

It's dangerous to look straight at the sun, especially in Los Angeles." Well, it's gotten better since I moved here. Now we don't have as much smog covering up the sun or what we did when I moved here. I believe in the sun.

Not so much because I see it, but because in it's light I see everything else. And now I would want to bring one of the truth tests. You mentioned truth at the outset of our discussion.

I'm glad you did. One of the truth tests is coherence and consistency. And what I have done really in my life, you've asked me how do I know? Do you mind if I answer it personally? I was brought up in a Christian background.

So the first worldview I met was from my parents. I was impressed by my parents, particularly because in a sectarian country of Northern Ireland, where everybody was fighting about religion or so it appeared, they didn't, but they loved me enough to give me space to think. So the first worldview I met was Christian.

And I got to Cambridge and in my first week at Cambridge somebody comes to me and

asked me the question, do you believe in God? And then they said, sorry I forgot you're Irish. You people all believe in God and you fight about it. You see.

In other words, they were giving a causal explanation in terms of my Irishness that was invalidating the claim, which is a very interesting phenomenon you see. So what did I do? I decided that like you, I'm interested in knowing whether it's the truth. Now my influence up to that point for my parents and many friends and Ireland had been almost exclusively Christian except that I'd read hundreds of books.

But that wasn't enough because I wanted to meet persons and ask them how they had come to their worldview. So I decided in week one in Cambridge in 1962 to befriend someone who didn't have my worldview. And I met an agnostic and we dialogue for two years.

And I've been doing that for my whole life. For the simple reason that I want to know whether it's true or not. And therefore one of the tests I've got is the coherence.

Does what is claimed in the Bible for instance? What is claimed for the revelation of God in the whole Judeo-Christian tradition? Does it make sense and does it work? And that is where I think I would place most of the emphasis actually and not on science. Well let me go back. Yes please.

I mean I take your point that there may be deficiencies in trying to look at this question too abstractly. Yes there are. I'm saying that your thinking has been shaped very much concretely by your own experiences and particularly your own dialogues with many many other people.

And I don't mean to, I mean that makes sense to me. But nevertheless I'd like to step back for just a moment. Because I mean I think it would be silly to say as an a priori matter that it's impossible for God to have revealed himself through the Bible or in any other manner.

I mean that seems to me to be pretty clearly a contingent question that can't be resolved a priori in one way or the other. But there are other questions about revelation especially how do we know that this really is a revelation and not something that a lot of people have believed falsely to be a revelation. So I don't mean to belittle that but I would just like to ask the question first.

How far can you get in a belief in God prior to revelation? Is that a clear question now? Oh and a very clear question. Well in one sense not at all because I believe that the universe is part of God's revelation we often call it a general revelation but I think you mean it more specifically. So I think you can get quite a long way and a lot of that would be science or literature the sense of longing and so on and so forth.

But to come to the heart of this actual question because this bothered me saying you

believe it because you're Irish. They're great storytellers in Ireland. How do you know it's not all made up and so on and so forth? I would want now to zero in on some of the actual specific claims that are made by the Christian faith.

Now you know as well as I do that the central thing that burst on the world in the first century was the startling notion that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. And of course that will send Richard Dawkins into orbit. The kind of miracle in itself.

Oh well I was just as fine I stopped I thought I was in danger of going in the wrong direction but never mind. It seems to me that here is something enormously important because the central claim of Christianity is that God became human. It's not simply that he revealed himself in terms of the prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah and he spoke to various people and so on.

But that God coded himself if I use the modern terminology that God coded himself into humanity and because we are humans made in the image of God we can understand the human. So this incredible claim and of course well it's not incredible for me but you know what I mean by incredible. This staggering claim that God became human.

The biblical claim is that the evidence for that par excellence is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And therefore we now have a concrete historical instance that we can investigate not in the strict scientific sense of oh let's repeat history and see what happened because we can't do that but we can do something near to that we can conduct a forensic examination. I mean the detective cannot repeat the crime to see who the murderer was but he conducts a forensic investigation of the evidence to try to get near what's going on and very very early on in Cambridge.

I remember listening to a very distinguished professor of Islamic law, Professor Sir Norman Anderson who was a Christian and he came to lecture to us in Cambridge and I remember a very gracious brilliant man and as a lawyer here I'm now explaining to you why I'd rather like lawyers. But I'll have to do this. As a lawyer he said let's have a look at the way in which I would handle the case for the resurrection.

Now we sat spellbound as this man who was one of the most distinguished lawyers in Great Britain, Sir Norman Anderson took this case apart and started saying okay let's assume it didn't happen. Christianity explodes from Judaism. That has got to be explained.

How are we going to explain it? I haven't time to go through the details tonight many people have done it but I remember as an undergraduate being massively impressed by this because he was bringing intellectual rigor to an event that was the pole event for the Christian faith and claiming that after a lifetime study of law he felt this event was one of the best attested events he'd come across in history. So that to my mind makes it even more concrete and so I would go there. I go there of course because when the

apostle Paul faced the Greek world, the intellectual world of the New Testament in Athens they of course asked him about his belief.

And he talked about creation and so on but the climax was when he said that God is appointed a day in which he's going to judge the world and he's shown by the man whom he has demonstrated by raising him from the dead. And what interested me was the fact that many of the audience laughed at that point as Luke records. They laughed because Paul was saying Anastasis, resurrection, standing up again.

Now many Greeks believed in a survival of the soul, that was a respectable doctrine but none of them believed that a dead body could stand up again. So that teaches us that right at the heart of Paul's message to the intellectual world was his unashamed claim that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. And I think that's the heart of the business.

I know of course what happens immediately and I see the shadow of Richard Dawkins almost at the room coming to say but that is absurd because David Hume showed long ago that miracles are impossible. Well that's why I revised my book to write a chapter at the end to show that David Hume was wrong but that's another story. So that's what I come to.

I don't know how you would show that miracles are impossible but I can certainly imagine people believing that they are highly improbable. Oh yes they are otherwise they wouldn't be miracles. So let me, but that's actually an important point.

That's an important point because you were saying Christianity arose in a prescientific age you remember and this is one of the arguments that they enter rose in an age when people didn't understand the laws of nature and of course they could believe in miracles all over the place. That's nonsense. And I tell you then as much as they know now the dead bodies don't rise up.

That's why they recognize it as a miracle. But David Hume if I might say a word will only take a few seconds was wrong and before he died I had a long chat with Anthony Flue the world's Hume expert who changed his mind and told me after a lifetime of writing books on Hume that Hume was wrong on this. Hume was wrong for a very simple reason.

He claimed that miracles were violations of the laws of nature. And that's nonsense. And C.S. Lewis illustrates this beautifully.

You imagine me going to my hotel tonight and I put a hundred dollars in one drawer and I put a hundred dollars in another drawer that's two hundred dollars by the laws of arithmetic. Yes. I wake up in the morning and I find fifty dollars.

What do I say? The laws of arithmetic of it broke and no I say the laws of California have

been broken. You're not familiar with our system of taxation here apparently. Oh yes I am.

I'm still trying to get a T.I.N. number. But the interesting thing about that point is this. That it's my knowledge of the laws of arithmetic that tells me that the laws of California have been broken.

That is a hand that has been put into the system. If I didn't know the laws of arithmetic I'd say okay a hundred plus a hundred is two hundred today is fifty to verify. In other words in order to recognize the supernatural like the resurrection of Jesus you have to live in a world that's mostly governed by regularity.

And you have to know them in order to recognize the exception. But you see the miracles aren't violating any law. When Jesus rose from the dead it wasn't a result of natural processes.

It was God injecting energy in from the outside. Just like in my simple analogy the thief put his hands in and takes the money out. But that's another story but I think it's important because it shoves out of the way this whole notion that science has showed that miracles are impossible.

It hasn't, it can't but of course it's shown they're improbable which we always knew they were. And as you say that's the point in a way. But no I mean I, although I asked the question earlier the idea of the pre-scientific world has never been an impressive issue to me because even people with vastly less sophistication than say the Greeks and the Romans or the other people living at that time you know you can go to you know people living at the most basic level.

They still know that when you're holding something and you let go of it it's going to fall and when you throw it you know when you do this it's going to go up in the air and they know when you, you know what, you rub sticks together and it's going to start a fire. I mean and they know the sun's going to rise and they know it's going to set the regularities of the universe. Yeah and nobody can function from day to day without entirely understanding that.

But let me ask you something different and this is something that I think in some ways may be a strength of Christianity but there you know there's at least an obvious sense in which it might be regarded as a weakness. On a lot of points the central issues of Christianity seem to be incomprehensible. So for example one of the most basic difficulties for those who hold the view of the materialistic universe is the question of a beginning.

And as you pointed out before Christianity has long claimed that the universe was created and now we have the big bang theory that suggests at least that it started at a

certain time. And yet then there's always the issue yes but if there can't be an uncaused cause then what created God? And I guess Christianity perhaps gives different answers to that as I understand it. Augustine's answer was that God is outside time and in a way that's a good answer but it seems to me that that's a way of saying we don't know what the explanation is because none of us has the slightest idea of what it means to be outside time or Christianity says that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are three but they are one.

And from those statements many wonderful things follow and yet it seems to be a way of saying we don't know what it is because we have no idea of what it means to be three and to be one and how a God as powerful and as amazing let's say as the God of Job could appear in the form as a human being and be the Holy Spirit. So my point is this and as I say I think this may be a strength or a weakness but it does seem as if many of the difficult questions are just explained by mysteries which is a Christian word that in a way are saying we don't know. So I don't know whether that's a challenge or a suggestion or a help but... It's a wonderful challenge.

But I'd be interested in your response to it. Yes, yes I love this particular thing and I have to think about it a great deal because of course it's absolutely obvious that replacing one mystery by another is not always a helpful way forward. Sometimes it might be.

Yeah, well if it's a more sensible mystery. Let's unpack this because there are three or four questions which is why I wrote them down because with my dying brains I can't remember everything. But let's come to that first question which is interested me because it's become a great focus recently both in North America, Britain and Europe.

Everybody's talking about it. I thought I left it behind in Russia and that's the question who created God. And Dawkins has made it the heart of his book *The God Delusion*.

I was staggered when I found it there. What I mean about Russia ladies and gentlemen is I used to get this all the time in the Academy of Sciences when I was traveling out to Russia in the late 1980s and the early 1990s you see. That was almost the first question.

If you believe that God created the universe then logically you've got to ask the question who created God and then you have to ask who created the God that created the God that created the God that created the God that created the God that created God and so on add infinitum. And that was the end of God of course and that's exactly what Dawkins says in *The God Delusion*. Well let's analyze it for a moment.

Who created God? If you ask that question it shows you've immediately categorized God as created. So you're talking about a created God. Now you imagine if Richard Dawkins had written a book called *The Created God's Delusion*.

I don't think many people would have bought it because I don't need him to tell me that

created God's or a delusion. We usually call them idols incidentally. You see this question, this question is extremely interesting because it's an illustration of a question that already rules out the explanation that's most likely to be true because the Christian claim is that God wasn't created.

So if God was uncreated in the beginning was the Word and I'm coming to your three and one now and I'm bringing it in obliquely, in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. He already was. So the central Christian claim is and in Judaism and Islam of course equally is that God is eternal.

So the question by definition doesn't even apply to him and that's immensely important. The only way you can get anything out of it then in the negative sense is to assume that everything is in the category of the created but that's just begging the original question and the Greeks were interested in it and that's why John's gospel starts with those words. In the beginning the Word already was and then it says all things came to be through him.

The Greeks were interested in the question of two categories, the things that came to be, the created things and the things that already were and the question resolves down to this, is there a thing or a being that never came to be? And that is the Christian claim and he's called God. But there's a little console to this you see. Richard Dawkins and I had a debate with him on this very topic in Oxford and I said to him, "Richard, you say that who created God is a legitimate question.

I don't think it is but let me assume now that it is. You believe that the universe created you." So I beg leave now to ask you, using your own question, "Who created your creator?" I'm waiting still for the answer. So that's the first point, very briefly to the second point.

God is three in one. Is it a mystery? Yes it is. And am I allowed to tell the story? Yeah, I think we should.

Yeah, move it on. Okay. But do tell the story.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I was talking to about a thousand scientists and a man came up to me afterwards, physicist and he said, "That was very interesting all that talk about God." But he said, "You know, I detect you're a Christian." And I said, "You're a... [laughter] Boy, a stewed gentleman. Yeah.

Well, that's what I said. I said, "You're pretty sharp." And he said, "Come off." He said, "Come off." And he said, "Bind up. As a Christian, you're obliged to believe that God is a trionate.

But Jesus was God and man." And he said, "Come on, you're a mathematician of the talksword. This is absurd." Can you explain it to me? Well, I said, "Can I ask you a

question for it?" He said, "Sure." So I said, "Tell me, what is consciousness?" And he thought for a second and then he said, "I don't know." I said, "That's okay. Let me try an easier one." What is energy? What I said, "I'm a physicist.

I can measure energy. I could use it." I said, "You know that's not my question. What is it?" He said, "I don't know." Oh, I said.

That's very interesting. You don't know. "Tell me," I said, "Do you believe in consciousness?" Yes, he said.

"Do you believe in energy?" Yes, he said. So I said, "You believe in these two things and you don't know what they are." I said, "Should I write you off as an intellectual?" And he said, "Please don't." And I said, "But that's exactly what you were going to do with me five minutes ago." And I said, "If you don't know what energy is, and nobody does, and if you don't believe that you physicists read Richard Feynman, if you don't know what energy is, don't be surprised if energy like gravity and consciousness are a mystery. Don't be surprised if you're going to get an element of this in God.

You're bound to get it. But now you've pushed them a bit further, you see. And I said, "Why do you believe in these things if you don't know what they are?" And that was a bit difficult.

So being kind, chapped, I tried to help them out. And I said, "You believe in these things because of their explanatory powers' concepts." And he said, "That's exactly right." And I said, "Look, of course I can't explain to you how God became human." But I said, "It's the only explanation that makes sense of the evidence as I see it." And I said, "I've got a simple analogy that might help you." It's a very low level analogy, but at least it's biblical. I'm married.

I've been married for 42 and a half years to the same person. And my wife and I are in a sense one where two persons in one flesh, the Bible would say, "But in one unit." And it seems to me that at the very least, don't misunderstand me when I say this, that this mystery is telling us something magnificent about God. God is not a monolith who to put it crudely was lonely, so he made a few people, so he could have somebody to talk to.

God is himself a fellowship. Now that's undimensioned, and we can't grasp it, but there is a sense in which I feel it's got to be something like that. God is big enough as a being and complex enough to have relationships within his own being that then reveal themselves.

So although I entirely agree there's mystery here, I think it's wonderful mystery because it begins to illuminate other things. And of course Christ himself, just to finish the point, began to give us some insight into us when he was on earth. He made claims like I and the Father are one.



And yet he said the Father judges no man. He's given all judgment into the hands of the Son. So they're one and yet they're differentiations of things that they do.

Well, would you expect that in God, of course? If God was some trivial being, easy to understand, I wouldn't tend to believe in him for a moment. So it seems to me that there is an approach that makes sense of these things. Begins to.

Well, we're going to want to go to the, I mean I'd love to follow up on some of these things. Sure, right. We'll go to questions, but I do want to say that of all the Christian writers or Christian apologists that I've read, and they're not the hundreds that Dr. Lennox has read, the one who has spoken the most to me and come closest to persuading me that I ought to become a Christian as has been G.K. Chesterton and in his book *Orthodoxy*, after you read Dr. Lennox's books, I would recommend Chesterton.

In his book *Orthodoxy*, he talks about the symbol of the cross and he says that this is a good, he thinks it's a good symbol of Christianity because at its center there's this clash that makes it somewhat contradictory or incomprehensible, but that because of that, the arms go infinitely out in all directions and that they sort of provide a straight way that gives good resolutions to all the problems that we need to deal with as humans despite this clash at the center. And it's a typical, I think, wonderful Chestertonian. Well, I will want to subscribe that too.

You know, I'm so glad you ended with a cross because we haven't mentioned it yet. And if I were to say, what is the biggest thing in my Christian faith? It's precisely that. It might be strange for you to hear an Oxford professor say it, but the biggest thing in my life, ladies and gentlemen, is that God loves me and that God has done something through Christ on the cross that brings forgiveness and peace with God and gives me a certainty and a meaning for the future.

And I like your image very much from Chesterton of the things stretched out wide. The cross only makes sense if Jesus is God, it makes no sense if he isn't. So hence the resurrection is so important to direct our minds to ask the big question if that is God on the cross.

What's he doing there? Now, the procedure that Dr. Lennox, this is the avant-garde fresh-o-a-thon. And we're going to get all the questions, including the six from in here, and we're also going to get some questions in writing that are going to be brought in from the people in the overflow room. And John, we said we were going to do first names and I completely forgot about that.

So John is going to, now that we've gotten to know each other, John is going to take all the questions, write them down and assimilate them, and then he's going to answer them in total in the order that he thinks will work best. You state that your main evidence for the truth of Christianity as opposed to other religions is on the basis of

personal experience and the question doesn't make sense and does it work. How is it that these lead you to believe in Christianity when followers of other religions have the same experiences? One of my questions was that one of the things that I've also talked about with also my believer friends and also my atheist friends, this idea of a deterministic system, what I mean by that is that if God already knows our priori that who's going to accept him, is there an idea of choice basically involved in believing in him? So one of basically the idea is that is it God who predetermines who is going to choose him or as us do we choose God and that's kind of been on both sides of the argument that I've been thinking about.

I was just a little lost, I was wondering if you say there's proof for God or you mentioned a lot of different things but could you maybe make like one argument like say if you were going to convert someone say this is the proof, absolute proof for God or if you can even do that. You were speaking about Paul talking about the resurrection and what an astounding claim this would have been and using this as sort of your central, one of your central arguments for the proof of Christianity and this is part of the widespread belief in it but we have multiple instances in the gospels of the gospel writers seeking to identify Jesus as a fulfillment of the prophecies that came before and there is large bodies of Jewish theology pre-fore, Jesus the deal with this issue of the raising of the dead and isn't it more plausible that perhaps Jesus' message spread the way it did because of its concerns with social justice and not so much because of this issue of the resurrection. Dr. Lawrence it's an honor to have you here, thank you very much for coming.

What I thought I had when you brought up the example of Henry Ford is that because we as human beings give laws and govern ourselves and we design things we know other mind than our own and we know no other consciousness than that which we experience is it possible that it's a human fallacy that we implant a mind similar to ours on a supernatural entity. I was told to limit it to five, I'm going to go to six and take the next person after you because I'd like to have at least one question asked by somebody who looks like he might be more than half of my age but I think we should hold it there because we have I think we're going to have some questions coming in from the overflow room too so thank you but I think we just need to cut it off. Hello my name is Elliot you've alluded both to the nature of explanations and solving one mystery with another.

In what sense if you're going to posit God as the creator of the universe that raises the additional question of what it means for an a temporal being to create something ex-nehalo. In what sense is saying God created the universe but I don't know what that means a better explanation than saying kukukuchu but I don't know what that means. Sorry could you repeat that last phrase.

How do you spell kukukuchu? Yes. My name is Douglas I wonder if you could say a little bit more about Hawking's claim that the universe came. I gone just a second.

He's still writing kukukuchu. I've tried six alternative spellings. I'm going to say that it's a music and that will make it easier to remember.

Okay. I wonder if you could say a little bit more about Hawking's claim that the universe began itself. I'm not sure is a duck going to come down with the questions from the overflow room or are they going to come in is there anybody who knows.

You have to be more than half my age to know what that's a reference to. That's the old Groutjo Marx program. Well, do you want to start with these and if we get some others we'll take a look at those as well? Yes sure.

Well, let's have our start and of course this is a Q&A and you rapidly further my ignorance if you haven't found it already but we'll have a little go at these things. The direction I used as a central argument but of course there are other arguments such as the fulfillment of the prophecies and that's absolutely right but that would be a separate discussion. I myself do believe that some very powerful evidence for the truth of Christianity proceeds from the Tanach or what we call the Old Testament and particularly the whole prophetic tradition of Judaism and some of those prophecies that were stated centuries before Christ particularly by Isaiah for example and then earlier Abraham.

I do believe they have very powerful evidential value in supporting the truth of Christianity. In particular they were already there to explain the significance of the crucifixion and the meaning of the death of Christ but your question was isn't it more plausible that Christianity spread because of social justice than resurrection? I would say that's equivalent to the question which of the two wings of an eagle is necessary for flight. In other words it seems to me that Christianity spread because it had a powerful base and that it is its leader had risen from the dead and that relationship with heaven, this is the claim and I've experienced it in thousands of other Christians as well, meant that they received a new kind of life that gave them moral power and therefore alerted them internally to social justice and questions of justice and I'm glad you mentioned it.

I think one of the very impressive things in history is I was just thinking and reading about William Wilberforce recently and saying of course that is a phenomenal thing but one of the questions I have that's related to this is where does the power come from to live morally? So for me there's no contradiction in what you say it's both and rather than either or. I just might want to explain William Wilberforce was a Christian, I don't think he was a minister but. No, he was a minister in the government.

Okay, a minister in the government but a deeply believing Christian in the 18th century who almost single handedly, I mean that's an exaggeration but was the driving force behind the movement against slavery that ultimately ended the slave trade in the world and to the extent that it has been ended slavery in the world. Sorry. Well, let me come just to the nature of explanation one.

There were scientific ones and then we'll get to the one that came from the Skeptic Society which interests me greatly. In one sense is saying God created the universe but I don't know what it means. I don't know what it means.

I don't know all that it means but I've certainly got a lot of ideas on what it means and so of you. Notions of creation are not unfamiliar to us and although we cannot necessarily extrapolate upwards to God and understand all of the aspects of it, to say that I didn't know what it means in any sense whatsoever would simply be false. So I think that the question in that sense is invalid.

It is much more than Kuka Kuka Chuk. Unless Kuka Kuka Chuk actually means when you translate it but God created the universe. I think he's actually probably from Berkeley that's there.

Here are the other questions if you want to take a look at them. Should I read them out loud so that people maybe we should do that? We can do that. What type you read them.

You read them. One of them says... Then set them down here so I can read them. Evolution from a scientific standpoint is a fact.

There are virtually no dissenters I think he means in the scientific community. If Genesis did not happen literally then original sin did not happen making Jesus useless. How do you rectify this? I think maybe it means how do you reconcile your beliefs? I know exactly what it means.

And the other questions are shorter than that. The next one is what type of evidence would convince Dr. Lennox that God isn't real? I think that's a good question. I don't mean... I think all the questions have been good questions.

I'm very judgmental but not in this setting. It's not my role tonight. If there is a God why are there bad things happening in this world? And the last question is we believe in energy because there is physical evidence for it.

Is there physical evidence for the existence of God? Okay. Well, let's have a look quickly. How long have we got? Midnight? These are very interesting but I must be true to the skeptics up here because we did promise them and I've got so many friends that are skeptics.

Actually skeptics, I'm a skeptic. I've spent my life being a skeptic but I'm very skeptical about some skepticism but that's another matter. One of the questions, I think two of you asked questions and one of them had to do with the truth of Christianity vis-a-vis other religions when they have the same experiences.

I think I understand what you mean but I would very much question having the same

experiences because I meet some religions where the notion of knowing that you were forgiven would be almost a blasphemy and being certain of it so that they would not claim to have those same experiences but I think really behind this question is a very important question is that we're in a world with different religions and how can I possibly advance the truth of one? Well, it seems to me in the end, skeptic as I am, I have to ask for evidence. I constantly am talking to, particularly to my Jewish and my Muslim friends of whom I have many and one of the things and I was talking to a Muslim friend just the other day and he said, of course he said we disagree about some matters of history and I said we do indeed and it is the fact, ladies and gentlemen, this is simply the fact that Judaism believes that Jesus died and did not rise, Islam believes he didn't die and Christianity believes he both died and rose again, they cannot all three be true and they are matters of history and what I would say is we have to decide and it's our personal decision in the end on the basis of the evidence as we understand it which one we believe to be true so I think there are ways of dealing with these things but one thing I would want to say is this, we must be very careful to distinguish two things because you will find that religions around the world have got many major elements in common as well as many differences and it seems to me that in our society we need to recall some of the common elements and those elements are to be found in our basic morality, you will find the golden rule do unto others as they would that you do to them in every religion and philosophy including Roman pagan religion and I think it's very important to show mutual respect to one another on that basis, I am making no moral critique of what my Muslim and Jewish and so on friends about their morality but they agree with me that there are these fundamental differences and so the only way we can't resolve the differences that would be observed, we've got to live in society with people free I hope to believe and articulate what they do believe but I must make my personal decision on the way in which the evidence leads. Now the other skeptic question, I think it was a skeptic question, was if God knows in advance what I'm going to do is there any choice in freedom and this question of course has been debated for centuries and I'm now about to give a lecture lasting one and a half centuries.

No I'm not because there are immense problems in understanding God's relationship to time and I think that we have two easily naive ideas about it. Why should we assume that God's knowledge of something causes it? I see no reason for doing that. Now we can debate this from now to midnight until tomorrow and we'll still discover there are differences of opinion.

So what do I do? Well as a Christian I try to say what the biblical claim is and it seems to me it is two halves. First of all there is a real sense in which God knows. Secondly there's a real sense in which I have real choice.

Indeed I do not see it as possible to have such a thing as love in a universe which is deterministic and that seems to me to be immensely important. The big thing about my marriage is that I chose my wife, I know why I did it, she chose me I wonder why. But

that freedom of choice is what makes love possible.

In a deterministic world love wouldn't be possible. So I might be very naive. I discover a world in which there is love so I conclude absolutely directly that whatever it is it is not a deterministic world in the fullest sense.

The next question was is there an absolute proof for God? Well I did try to say that you only get proof in my field of mathematics in the rigorous sense. In all other disciplines of science and elsewhere we can only give evidence, pointers and so on. I said only but I came here on a Boeing 747.

I trusted my life to it. I had an absolute proof it would get me to San Francisco. I can't prove to you that my wife loves me but I'd stake my life on it because I feel there is enough evidence.

So it seems to me that there is evidence. Now you say what is the proof that you would use? Is there one proof above all others? No there isn't because we're all different and we all come to this in different ways. So arguments, you heard Professor Lowenstein say that earlier, that it's not the science that would appeal to him so much as something else.

So I have no sort of hears the argument so to speak. Everybody's different and that is one actually of the evidences in itself that I find the simplest people, the brightest people, the most humble people, people from all over the world they can come to a certainty of knowledge of peace with God through Jesus Christ. That is one of the evidences that weighs with me.

Now there was a human question. I'll come to that in a minute. We designed things and so on.

Are we in danger of imposing design on the universe? Well we could be and human this point but quite frankly I would prefer an explanation that makes sense than one that doesn't make sense. What I mean by that is this. There is evidence of designing intelligence in the universe.

Now in my book I write about it. One of the evidences to me is the longest word we talked about kukachukachuk but there's a much longer word than that. It's the DNA code of the human genome.

Now whatever processes, natural processes were involved in that, it is a text. And the moment we see a text that is meaning, four letter alphabet, 3.5 billion letters long, all in the right order. The moment we see a text we infer immediately upwards to intelligence.

Three letters of your name written on the beach in California here will indicate to you that a mind has been behind it. Now if you say ah that's imposing something on the

universe to look at the universe like that, I say well half a minute. It makes sense to ascribe such a text ultimately to a mind.

It makes nonsense not to. Because the idea that an unguided mindless process could produce a text flies contrary to everything we know. That's not an up-down argument.

But as I would say, I would prefer an explanation that makes sense to one that doesn't. Okay, what will I say about Stephen Hawking and the universe created itself? I've written a book on it in the last two months. It's called God and Stephen Hawking.

And I gave a lecture on it at lunchtime and I can't really say any more about it except that to claim, and here is the central claim of his book because there is a law of gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. I think that sentence, that statement contradicts itself at three distinct levels. I'll just give you one of them, the one that's focused by the question.

If I say x creates y, the words mean that I need to presuppose x to explain y. If I say x creates x, it means I'm presupposing x to explain the existence of x. And that's nonsense even if you set x equal to the whole universe. So I think Hawking is actually talking nonsense. And it just goes to show that nonsense remains nonsense even if somebody very highly intelligent speaks up.

Now, let's see how we're doing. We're nearly done, I think. Evolution is a fact.

Well, nothing ought to be really controversial. I would want to say what you mean by evolution. What Darwin observed is one thing, but that mindless unguided processes are responsible for everything is another thing.

But you can have a look at my book, but the question is really geared to this. If Genesis is to be taken literally, and now we come to it, I'd love to be able to spend a long time on this. This notion of literal is a very misleading notion.

It has two meanings actually when the ancient thinkers like Augustine talked about, well, he wrote a book on the literal interpretation of Genesis, but he didn't mean literalistic. By literal he of the later reformers meant that you take a statement in its natural meaning. So if it's base level literalistic, let it be.

Israel was a land. Okay? But go to the next bed, flowing with milk and honey. What? When the Israelites came into the land, they met a great sticky mess of honey flowing down the main street.

Well, of course not. It's a metaphor. It's a metaphor though for something real.

And C.S. Lewis, I do wish they'd teach English grammar these days in schools. C.S. Lewis taught me a great deal. And the big thing he taught me about this is that just because

the sentence is a metaphor in it, it doesn't mean that something real isn't meant.

And people say to me, do you take it by literally? That's a meaningless statement. Let me put it this way. Jesus said, I am the door.

Do you take it literally? Well, clearly not. I have a just a moment. Is he a real door? Oh, yes, he is.

At the higher level, the first level of metaphor up for the base, he is a real door into a spiritual experience of God that's more real than that door over there. You see, we make a mistake when we think that metaphors mean that it's not real, but that's foolishness. We use metaphors.

Scientists do it all the time. Listen to the next time you hear scientists describing an electron and things that buzz around in little orbits. They do no such thing.

And so on. But anyway, I leave that. But I have actually written a book on this because I've got very concerned about it.

And it will appear at some stage later this year, it's called Seven Days That Divide the World. And you'd probably understand what that means. But now, let me come rapidly to the end.

Is there physical evidence for the existence of God? Well, I think I've said enough about that. By physical evidence, I suppose you mean the kind of thing we do in science. I think there is.

I think there's physical evidence at the level of the change that God can affect in people's lives is observable. When an experience of God converts a person from drug addiction to being a happy, loving husband, that's physical evidence in a way, isn't it? And I can spend a long time talking about that, but I won't. Because there are a couple of questions left.

What type of evidence would convince Dr. Lennox that God isn't real? Evidence that Jesus didn't rise from the dead, for instance, I would take seriously. Christianity is falsifiable. That's what this question really implies in the papierian sense.

Of course, it's falsifiable because it's testable. During June, having lived for all the great number of years I have to constantly testing my faith, it would take an enormous amount of evidence. That's natural, of course.

Just as having lived for 42 years with the same wife, it would take an enormous amount of evidence for you to convince me that she was being unfaithful. And that's natural. There's nothing wrong with that.

But the final question here is the hardest question that's been asked tonight. And it's



this, if there is a God, why do bad things happen to good people? The problem with evil and pain. I've just come back from New Zealand, sitting, talking to a woman who was in her office.

The earthquake happened, the walls collapsed, killing instantly the girl at the far side of the table and she's left alive. And I had to give a lecture on this very thing over there. I'm going to suggest two things to you.

If you're really interested in this question, Google my name in New Zealand and you'll find a whole web page dedicated to the lectures packed with students, which I gave on this topic. But I'm going to say something about it. Many of my colleagues, I'll be open with you.

This is the hardest question I face. The badness of people. Now there are two questions.

There's the question of moral evil. That's what humans do to other humans. And I've thought of it often as I've stood in Auschwitz.

Then there's a problem of pain, natural disasters, disease, where there's no immediate human agency involved. There are separate questions, but they're actually related in a way that I cannot begin to talk about tonight. Many of my friends, I tell you straight, say, look, all this God talk from science is very interesting and all the rest of them.

Please don't talk to me about a personal God. Just look at the evil in the world. What do I say to them? Well often I say something like this.

Okay, then there isn't a God. You've solved the problem. The universe just is as it is.

Some people are lucky and most people are not. And that's how it is. And we've got to face it and move on.

So they solve the problem. But wait a minute, have they? Have they? Richard Dawkins commenting on the universe says, "The universe is just as we'd expect to find it. If at bottom there's no good, no evil, no justice.

DNA justice and we dance to its music." Well of course if that is true, as I pointed out to him, that's the end of all morality. And then I don't understand then how he's criticizing and talking about things that are evil if there isn't such a thing. And I think that's a major problem for atheism actually, believing that aside, coming down to the sheer practicality of it.

Atheism claims to remove the problem. That's just how the world is when we've got to face it. But I notice what it doesn't remove and that's the pain and the suffering.

It's still there. And we have to face it. So the atheist doesn't have the problem in one sense.

I do because I still believe in God. So how do I face it? Well I'll tell you straight, I have no easy answer to it. I haven't.

This world is full of ragged and jagged and difficult edges. But I don't despair and I'll tell you why not. I can't solve the problem of evil.

I can't. So I asked myself another question. Granted there are jagged and ragged and raw questions, particularly for people who are suffering from earthquakes and disease.

And there are in earthquakes as well as out to earthquakes, you know. Get a brain tumor. And that will affect you as much as an earthquake that shifts the tectonic plates on earth.

I asked myself this question, ladies and gentlemen, and very seriously. Is there sufficient ground to trust God, granted that the universe is as it is? And that brings me back to where Professor Lewenstein ended the first part of our time together tonight. If that was God on the cross, ladies and gentlemen, what does it tell me? It tells me many things, but it tells me one in particular, and that's this, that God has not remained distant from the problem of human suffering, but has become part of it.

It's there I see a window in to hope because the cross was not the end. It led to the resurrection. But there we've got to leave it.

What a wonderful audience you've been. And secondly, I want to say that this for me has been one of the most enjoyable public discussions I have ever had. And it's thanks to our moderator, Professor Lewenstein.

And I want you to show your appreciation for what he's done. Now I hope we'll get a round of applause that will put that to shame in a moment. But I would like to say one word about my experience here tonight, because I've been on the UC Life faculty for more than 30 years now, and I've made many, many academic presentations, and I think probably in every single instance, it was because I had, or somebody was foolish enough to believe that I had some expert knowledge of the field.

And that's the way we generally operate in higher education. And of course it's very valuable to do that, to take a group of people who have been studying some question, you know, with great diligence, and have a lot of knowledge and a lot of understanding, and to get them to exchange ideas. And that's one way in which knowledge moves forward.

But I think there is an older tradition in higher education that had a place for a certain kind of amateurism. And I think that's important also, because the questions that we've been talking about tonight are too important for all of us to be left exclusively to the theologians and the philosophers and others who do have expert knowledge, valuable though their input is. The questions, for example, that I and my colleagues deal with in

the law school of human society and human justice are also too important for everybody to be left to a group of specialists.

The problems dealt with in this building, the questions of business should not be left only to the executives and to the economists and others with expert knowledge. So this has been an unusual experience for me to have an opportunity to engage with somebody who is very knowledgeable on a subject that is of interest to me, but in which I don't claim to be an expert. And I think that I've enjoyed it a great deal.

Each of you has to decide for yourself if this was a good format. But I think there is something good in this. I think this has been a delightful evening for all of us to have the chance to hear from Dr. Lennox.

Obviously he brings to this not only very strong convictions of his own and great erudition, but also I think a delightful verve and eloquence. And now let's have some real enthusiasm. [APPLAUSE]

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